R Lorimer T-3 (1929-4; 1934-8) 1939 AVT Burushō AVT

681 ment. A few years' exile in Shimshāl is incomparably preferable to three years' penal servitude in Wormwood Scrubs, yet Hunza delinquents do not become recidivists.

643 423 Young Muhammad Nazim Khān took up his job determined, in the light of his travels and experience, to alter much that had been traditional under his ancestors, and within three years of his accession he had completely abolished the Yerpa system of cultivating the royal lands. Such as lay immediately under his own eye he retained, but all the rest are leased out on easy terms to tenants. For the first years a tenant pays no rent at all for new ground that he brings under the plough; he has to get his fields carved out, his water-channels made, and the soil worked. After the land begins to bear he pays a small fixed rent in kind, and if at any point he finds the bargain unprofitable he is free to resign his holding. A large part of the "new settlements" of Aliābād, including all the district immediately round our house, was *kuniāl* land (*viz.* royal land leased out), and there was no question that the system was working to everyone's satisfaction. The extra fields available had been eagerly taken up by families in the older settlements who were finding their freehold land too cramped, and many of our neighbours were sons who had hived off from the family freehold and whose relations were still living in Baltit, Haidarābād, or Dorkhan.

556 842 We once enquired, *à propos* of the meaning of the words "rich" and "poor": "Now what would you people consider a rich man?" "One who had, say, a hundred animals." (The ordinary peasant household has twenty or so sheep, goats, and cows.) "And is there any rich man in Aliābād?" "Only one, the Yerpa." This struck us as highly significant; the one rich man still bore by courtesy his grandfather's title of "Steward"! He was no doubt still enjoying his grandfather's ill-gotten gains. Our Yerpa was, in fact, a genial, kindly man, reputed generous. He was not envied: "Poor chap, he has no sons; he has to hire herd-boys to mind his flocks, and labourers to work his fields." In Hunza a man's true wealth is in his sons; they work the farm with him; if there are several, some can go abroad and earn. Not that a woman or a woman's work is

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-6) 1939 AVT Burusho AVT

under-valued, but a boy will bring a wife to the house and children to the hearth, while a daughter will take her labour and her children to her husband's home.

In pre-British days the Hunza men bore a bad name in Central Asia as daring raiders. They are a hardy, fearless race, and they would strike a track through uninhabited and uninhabitable mountain country, leaving dumps of food at intervals as they went, fall on a rich caravan travelling from Leh to Yarqand, carry off the spoil, and return—via their food dumps—to divide the proceeds, the lion's share of which fell, of course, to their brigand chief. Any prisoners captured were sold as slaves into Afghanistan or Central Asia. Alternatively they would raid across the river into Nagir and come back with slaves and cattle.

Since such a form of life invites reprisals the Hunza people lived walled in in tight-packed villages close under their forts. We had in Aliábád the old fort-village, built on a promontory, with ravines protecting it on both sides, surrounded by a wall whose twelve beacon towers could send warning of a raid up and down the river—"and the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle." Only one of these beacon towers now remains and the crowded hovels are falling to decay. Since the *Pax Britannica* has come, the peasant builds his house and stores his crops out amongst his fields and orchards—without even a watchdog. A few conservative families move into their old "town house" in winter time perhaps for warmth and companionship, perhaps merely to make a change.

These famous raids were primarily the sport of chieftains, and the peasants of to-day find adventure enough, and danger enough, in their daily life not to regret them. The profits of such raids, which welcomely supplemented the scanty produce of the fields, are nowadays more than compensated by the money which the British put into circulation. The Mir draws a small and well-earned salary for his services as guardian of the frontier, a grant for keeping up the road through his territory, and a subsidy for his bodyguard of twenty-four men or so. Any sons the peasant can temporarily spare take service with the Gilgit Scouts, in the Public Works or other Govern-

Ri Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

with a shaft of bright sunlight striking obliquely through the smoke-hole, and innumerable youngsters in continuous movement. Still, he got some records, if not exhibition photographs, of the event.

In many ways Hunza marriage customs are more enlightened than our own. The newly wedded pair are permitted the privacy of some barn or outhouse for their early days, but the two are not abandoned to their own inexperience to make or mar their future physical relations; no terrified bride is forcibly raped on her wedding night by the clumsy impetuosity of her mate, no diffident and chivalrous boy left agape in ignorance of acceptable advances. The bridegroom's mother stays with them, and teaches him to woo and win in such fashion that both may have the maximum joy of their new experience. In cases where the bride is over-fearful or over-young, the boy's mother will sleep between them to protect her till the couple are ripe for mating, and should the bride conceive an unconquerable aversion for her husband the marriage is tolerantly annulled by consent. Her own mother will reason with her and endeavour to persuade her, but the girl will not be coerced against her will.

When the instructional honeymoon is over the young people take their place with the other married pairs in the common living-room, where kindly darkness gives privacy at night to all.

As soon as a woman is aware that she has conceived, she quits her husband's side and joins the other women on their sleeping bench, while he rejoins the group of bachelors, and not until their child is weaned will the couple mate again. A husband who babbled of marital rights as overriding the rights of wife and child would be an outcast amongst his kin. If a father by impatience robs his child of the full period of its mother's nursing—usually three years for a boy and two for a girl—the pirate baby that ensues is stigmatized by a name more opprobrious than "bastard." This enforced continence appears to inflict no hardship on the husband; he is not asked to exercise it in a *solitude à deux* or the provocative proximity of a barbaric double bed. Moreover, he has known from babyhood that such a forbearance forms an integral part of the scheme of

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

married life; he has been married early and has no arrears of sex-starvation to make up, and he lives a healthy, active, outdoor life with no unwholesomely suggestive literature or cinema shows to stir his blood to rebellion. This admirable convention automatically spaces Hunza infants at decent intervals without artificial birth-control.

Unfaithfulness on either side is extremely rare, and I venture to assert without fear of contradiction that in Hunza morals are higher than in any other country in the world. There is no prostitute in the country, and no venereal disease. We may, I think, fairly ascribe this to high principle and a strongly developed tradition of fine practice, but we need not overlook the fact that circumstances conspire to reinforce principle. DL and I used sometimes to amuse ourselves speculating on the possible ways in which a pair of errant lovers, if such existed, could gratify their guilty passion, and we decided that the way of transgressors would be exceptionally hard.

No man or woman could be absent from the usual sleeping place without immediate comment, and by day each person's duties and destinations and occupations are common knowledge. The countryside lies sloping and open to view, and every corner and cranny of it, even the desolate rocky mountain sides where large boulders or ravines or semi-caves might seem to offer privacy, is subject to invasion at any moment by a herd-child with his goats. One tale was told us of an intriguing pair. The woman lover went to the edge of the river cliff, left some identifiable articles on the brink, and staged an accident. She then hid herself with the mother's connivance in the locked store-room of her lover's house. No search was made for the body, for these mountain rivers reveal no secrets, but it was, of course, not long before her presence in her lover's house was discovered. The unusual case came up before the Mir, whose sane judgment was that the guilty pair had better be divorced from their lawful partners and married to each other. Public opinion would have none of it, and while discussion was proceeding the disgraced woman drowned herself in earnest. I don't remember what the man's fate was, but general odium would certainly compel him to seek voluntary exile.

7:Tobe C.T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

CHAPTER 51

They Chose Years Ere Comfort

I Will Not go on record as stating that some Hunzans have sired children at the ripe old ages of 80, 90 or more, because I have no proof of such occurrences, although this information was relayed to me by some people of authority.

Yet, I would not disbelieve or laugh at that statement, because from my studies I have found that where the human body is fed natural proper food, the regenerating process in the body can be maintained for a long time. Yes, and all the faculties can be alert and keen well into a ripe old age. Most certainly the people of Hunza have lived and still live, in the main, according to the laws of nature.

I would, without hesitation, accept the fact that the people of Hunza are longer-lived than most people. Everything about their way of life seems to lend credence to the tales. I investigated, I asked questions and

842 The country cannot afford or support a greater population than exists there today. Therefore, they will have to practice birth control, which it is claimed they already do but with which I disagree, or they will have to send their youths out of the country, which, as a matter of fact, they are doing.

311 There is very little chance of finding or creating more arable land in the country. I believe they have practically every inch tilled now that is tillable. There is no land left in that part of the world that is yet to be broken.

889 Their land and their fruit trees are their whole life. Their health, pleasant dispositions and industry, which they possess to the highest degree, are their entire wealth.

578 Quarreling among children and adults seems to be something that doesn't exist in Hunza. I found close affection and love was the general, accepted pattern throughout the area. This is even more surprising when you realize that most of the houses in the villages are built practically one on top of the other.

181 152 It was clear to me that they knew no worries and that they create no worries. There was absence of jealousy, greed, covetousness and hurry. Their outlook on life is most unpretentious. They are proud people and do not grovel before anyone and they do not pretend to be anything but what they really are.

433 Every Hunzan farmer is completely self-sufficient, even though he might trade for something that is in short supply or that he would like to possess. He grows wheat, barley, potatoes, millet, cabbage, beans, onions, lettuce and occasionally a bit of rice. In their orchards they have apricots, apples, pears, walnuts and mulberries. Every family has sheep and goats and sometimes a cow or an ox, and occasionally a yak. They till

compliment them by mentioning among their qualities the fact that they were precise and exacting. That statement is about as far-fetched as a statement can be. 805

In the cities of Asia and when dealing with government officials, one found them quite observant of time. An appointment for a certain hour was usually kept at that hour. However, in dealing with the people of Hunza I found that time and distance were meaningless. All rivers were nullahs, all mountains were doran. Haste and speed caused consternation. They did not understand the necessity or need for it. I stress again however, that in the official capacity this did not necessarily apply. [804]

Birth control—More than one writer, and some who should have had more common sense, has referred to the extraordinary method of birth control as practiced by the people of Hunza. From my observations I would state clearly and to the point, that they don't know what birth control means and it is from my observations and conclusion definitely not practiced. 842

The average family in Hunza consists of 7 people which means that they have 5 living children. Many have more, some have less. If you can call that birth control by any stretch of the imagination, well, that's your privilege. [163]

Even the most primitive of people know that as long as the child is sucking at the mammary glands the ovum somehow doesn't come down the fallopian tubes . . . nature's own method of survival, as common sense will indicate.

I know—I know—I know that some or many obstetricians and general practitioners say that it doesn't mean a thing, but they are just trying to prove that science is greater than empiricism. Sure, I know that conception can take place under the circumstances

842 mentioned above and so do women who have reached the menopause age become pregnant, but it doesn't happen every day.

Siring children at 90 *and* 100 *years of age*.—The only conclusive proof or record that I could find concerning men well up in years siring children was that of the Mir's grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. It is definitely recorded that he sired a son when he was in his 75th year.

Upon questioning and during discourse with the Mir, the resident doctor and the affected individuals themselves, it is clearly established that the siring of offspring at the age of 70 and upwards is quite common. Invariably it was revealed in these studies that the men had married younger women, their second or third wives. It is suggested that the answer lies somewhere close to this very important related fact.

165 [217] *Living to the age of* 140 *years*. The oldest man that I could find in Hunza was said to be 105 years old. I want to stress firmly that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. Therefore it is not easy to establish any definite age or date. I will, however, accept this old man's age as being correct and established beyond doubt. The fact that he was alive before the Mir's grandfather was born (who died when 79 years of age in 1938) is ample proof that the statement is correct and true.

There are many people in Hunza over 90 years of age, quite a few over 95 years of age and some over 100 years.

142 165 *Their women are beautiful when they are* 70 *and* 80 *years old*. This I will agree is a statement that depends entirely upon a man's appreciation or understanding of beauty. I have seen old women of 80 who I thought were beautiful in a frail, wrinkled, grandmotherly way.

4: Biddulph G-3 (1873-1878) 1880 AV3 Dard AV3
Burusho AV7

In Gor, rings are exchanged at marriage. In the ruling families of Hunza and Nager, it is the custom, when a daughter is married, for the bridegroom to present her at betrothal with a gold and silver needle. In Yassin, when, as not unfrequently happens, the bridegroom is too poor to pay the required price, the young couple elope, with the consent of the bride's parents. At the end of ten days the bridegroom comes to them and asks forgiveness, promising to pay the required sum by degrees. A little scene is acted, forgiveness is granted, the neighbours are summoned to the feast which has been already prepared, and the wedding is celebrated. This is to save the credit of the bride's family in not having received a sufficient price for her.

The old marriage barriers between the castes are beginning to be broken down under the levelling influence of Mahommedanism, and in a few generations will probably disappear altogether. The birth of a son is always a matter of general rejoicing. The friends of the happy father at once make it an excuse to stop work for the day, and seizing their matchlocks keep up a general *feu-de-joie* till their powder flasks are empty. The village band is summoned, and dancing kept up round the door for the rest of the day. No notice is taken of the birth of daughters. In the Oxus Valley and in Sirikol, when a son is born, all the father's friends hang their weapons on the walls of his house, so as to accustom the infant to martial sights. After seven days the weapons are returned to the owners, except those belonging to near relations, who receive special presents in exchange.

After the birth of a child a woman is esteemed unclean, and no one will eat from her hand for seven days. North of the Hindoo Koosh this period is extended to forty days, and for the first seven the infant is not allowed to suckle its mother.

I have elsewhere discussed the old custom of disposing of the dead by burning. Now the common form of Mussulman interment is used. A small flat slab of earth about two feet long is neatly plastered over the graves, and a light is kept burning at night by newly-made graves, under the pretence of keeping away wild beasts till the earth has hardened; but, as Mr. Drew has remarked, this is more probably a relic of the old practice of cremation. No attention or care is paid to old graves, which constantly present a most unpleasant appearance, owing to the falling-in of the arched roof. I remarked in Sirikol the same want of attention to old graves